

# HOW DEMOCRACY WORKS IN INDIA

H. L. SETH

ALLIED INDIAN PUBLISHERS  
CIRCULAR ROAD, BHANDARI COTTAGE,  
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### CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	LEAGUE IN THE SADDLE	... 5
II	JINNAH AND DEMOCRACY	... 12
III	MUDDLE IN SIND	... 20
IV	THE EASTERN FRINGE OF PAKISTAN	... 50
V	PUNJAB AND THE N. W. F.	... 59
VI	DEMOCRACY UPROOTED	... 66

#### PREFACE.

Ever since the war started democracy has been facing acute peril in India. The Congress ministries resigned in September 1939, and thereafter most of the provinces were subjected to Governor's rule. That was the virtual end of whatever skeleton democracy was offered in the Government of India Act of 1935.

But the eyes of the world were fixed on the political situation in India and people wanted to know why in a war which was professedly being fought to save democracy, representative Government had ceased to function in India. The British were anxious therefore for an early resumption of democratic Government in India ; though they did not want to accept the demands of the Congress.

It was at such a time that communalist parties of India stepped in the breach and showed willingness to work democracy in India. As a result of their efforts "Democracy" was revived in several provinces. But it is not a truly Democratic regime, which is functioning in provinces.

This book deals with all the aspects of Democracy at present being worked in India, and it is made clear that Democracy is not working in India.

H. L. SETH.

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## CHAPTER I.

### League in the Saddle.

Ever since the Muslim League celebrated the "deliverance day" rejoicing over the resignation of congress ministries, there has been a scramble for office among its top leaders ; who have hankered after the same power which congress enjoyed. Of course there could not be anything wrong in a party desiring political power in a democratic state. Even the most backward parties with very little following can realise such ambitions. But only by democratic methods, and not intrigues behind the scenes, political manoeuvres or opportunism. And once that power is achieved it should not be used to satisfy a few on the top but the state should become what the Germans call Volkstaat or the peoples' state.

In case of the League, that has not been the case. It has not sought power because the congress had failed to rule in interests of the people, or forgotten their rights. It had not come forward with an alternative democratic programme of people's welfare. It had fought the elections not on any political slogans, but religious, and like Hindu Sabha, it had faced the electorate, posing as champion of rights of a particular section of the people, and not of the country whole. While the congress had enumerated, a programme of National reconstruction as early as 1931, at the Karachi Session and made fresh amendments to it after that so that the election Manifesto contained the full plan of

radical reforms—the league has only recently at the Karachi Session declared an economic and social programme—not for the entire country—but for the areas in which it proposes to establish Pakistan. However it is about after twelve years of the Karachi Congress that the League has awakened to the need of a programme of National reconstruction—in this long period, when in country after country big changes have taken place, and New deals, and Four year or Five year plans, have been the order of the day—the League has remained smug and complacent waiting for a favourable wind which should set its sails in motion.

Regrettable though this delay is, it is not the only disgusting features of the League Karachi resolution. They are not introducing any plan of national reconstruction now but after Pakistan is achieved. And the reforms are by no means radical, while nationalisation of some industries is proposed, landlordism remains intact, because the landlords inside the league would not like any drastic land reforms to be introduced. Thus the Karachi resolution is an utter failure.

But it should make it clear that even in this late hour of the day the league leaders are not prepared to embark on any programme of Nation—building.

The conditions that prevailed six or seven years ago were much worse. The league leaders instead of showing readiness to collaborate with the congress in carrying out the schemes of reconstructing India, began to pile up a list of imaginary grievances against the congress, and started driving a wedge between the premier political party of India and the Muslims. It was clear to see then that they had dreams of power for sake of power. They did not want to serve the cause of

people through the democratic state.

Thus we find that their opposition to congress, grew in 1938 and 1939, when they initiated the campaign about separate Muslim State.

The reactionaries in England, welcomed these views of Jinnah about "deliverance day," and "two Nations" in India. Jinnah learned the habit of appealing to the British instead of the people to whom some power had been transferred by the Government of India Act. If the congress ministries had signed and they were incompetent rulers, Mr. Jinnah should have seized the opportunity to appeal to the people to place him and his party men in power. If he had any influence, he could have got much more than what he demands now.

Instead he began manoeuvres with reactionaries in England and India for power or impressing upon the viceroy and congress that if there were any transference of power, and the British did not recognise his two-nation theory (which the Indian people never had) he would obstruct such plan with all his power. These threats of obstruction continue right upto our own times.

But Jinnah was not an obstructionist only. As the conflict between the congress, and the British become marked, and the congress Assembly members were sent to prison, he saw that in such provinces as Bengal and Sind where there was a majority of Muslim population it might be possible to oust the Nationalist Muslims from power and replace them by his own men. Here again his method was characteristic. He did not seek the support of the people, but instead indulged in intrigues against the Nationalist Muslims.

Muslims leaders Abul Kasem Fazal Haq, and Allah Bux



Muhammad Umar stood their ground against the league attacks. The former was in the league upto August 1942, but then the congress members formed quite a formidable block in Bengal Assembly, and Abul Kasam Fazal Haq did not become a puppet of Jinnah. In August of that year he had resigned from the league due to "the non-representative character of the league, and the autocratic attitude of the President." After that he started a new progressive league. So that he remained premier of Bengal, only as a Nationalist Muslim independent of Jinnah. Premier Haq had thrown a challenge to Jinnah, by his public denunciation of league leadership. If Jinnah had any backing among the Bengal Muslims Haq could not remain premier for a day. But that was not the case. Jinnah swallowed this insult calmly, and waited till there was trouble between governor and Premier Haq, when the latter was "persuaded to resign." It was then that the league followers had an opportunity to form an unholy combination with Europeans and rule the country.

In Sind too it was only after the resignation and assassination of Allah Bux that league members became prominent and had their own premier.

Punjab's Sikander so long as he lived refused to merge unionist party in the league. So far as he was concerned as a marriage of convenience between the unionist party which he had the honour to preside and the league, Sikander wanted, all India popularity, and thought that a prominent place in the league council could help him to reach the desired goal. The league was an all India organisation. It had influence over certain sections of Mussalmans. He was at best a provincial leader, little known outside Punjab. The league leader Jinnah had on the other hand little influence in Punjab.

Barkat Ali's league-like Lloyd George's council of action before the war had a high sounding name without any solid following in the public. Jinnah wanted a party to back up his cause. The unionists were there to do that. Hence the alliance.

With Sikander's death the way was paved for a Gleichshaltung of the league with unionist party. In N.W.F.P. the arrest of Khan Brothers, and other leading congress members of Assembly gave the league the same advantage which it had in Bengal and Sind. Even Assam where the league had of all provinces in India, least power buzzed with activities of this organization. As soon as the congress leaders were gaol'd the leaguers became prominent.

While formerly the only prominent political news from this Wales of India was about the quarrels between the Indian coolies and their European lords and masters, now it was resounding with the cries of Pakistan.

The league leaders had succeeded in putting the clock back to those old times of Mughal period, when with weakening of the power of party in control of the greater part of India the remote provinces broke up into independent units of states where anarchy was rife. This is not to say that congress democratic rule in any way resembled the Mughal State built on ideas of autocracy. There was a world of difference between the two. But there was no doubt that the league had taken advantage of the end of congress administration to grab power for itself and establish a rule which could not be described as democratic by any stretch of imagination or misapplication of English language.

They had taken advantage of departure from political

scene (either due to death or removal from office) of those men who were not in congress but who did not at the same time wish to become the puppets of the league high command.

It was a back-bencher's day-just as in Parliament it so happens that some-time if the notable speakers are absent the back benchers become prominent, so in India the noted leaders were either dead or in prison and the back-benchers had taken their place. The greatest back-bencher of all these was Jinnah himself, who had no power in any of the provinces while the congress ruled over the country. (Though Sikander and Fazal Haq respected him then as a leader, they acted as the needs of their provinces dictated and did not take orders from Jinnah), but who now became a powerful leader with premiers of several provinces following his commands ("If Qaid Azim were to ask me to resign to-day I should do it," Aurangzeb in a recent speech).

But the happiest man in this ministry making business, apart from Mr. Jinnah who enjoyed immense power and had reason to be pleased with his achievement, was Leopold Amery the Secretary of State for India. Time and again Amery had told the Parliament that league represented ninety Million Musalmans of India, and that it was very much popular among them.

But he was told by his opponents in England that the leaguers enjoyed power in no province and that even in some of those provinces where Muslims had majority, the congress or procongress party ruled. Now he could point out that the Muslim league had power and that Muslims of five provinces were behind the league.

But apart from the need of Muslim league assuming

power, Leopold Amery was worried about a thing or two more. The continued absence of any popular government in most of the Indian provinces created a bad impression in America where they thought that Democracy had ceased to function in India. Some facade of such government had to be created in one or two provinces so that the people abroad should be favourably impressed with working of democracy in India. Only the wicked congress had in certain places refused to co-operate unless demands of Indian independence, and broadening of the anti Fascist Front were accepted. But the people were gradually leaving the congress fold and life was once again becoming normal. So that at the most it was a matter only of few weeks before in other provinces ministries would start functioning again ; even without congress support. While campaign on this line can be carried on by Amery abroad, so far as the league is concerned, he can assure its leaders that he has given them almost, what they desired Pakistan. The present activities of the league ministries could provide them a training for their Pakistan State. It is doubtful however if Jinnah has that in mind. He would not like even this semblance of democracy in his Pakistan State. And so far as satisfaction with Leopold Amery is concerned, his speech at Karachi Session, shows that he is far from being satisfied. Instead of being grateful for being given this miniture Pakistan, with full powers in few provinces, he has put forward the demand of "divide and Quit."

## CHAPTER II.

### Jinnah and Democracy.

But whether Jinnah achieves his goal of Pakistan by slogans of "Divide and Quit", or by any other methods or fails to reach his destination he has scored, one Victory at least and is saddled in power. How is he going to rule? Will democracy remain or be dismembered beyond recognition? He had no political or economic plan worth the name in 1937-39 and would have made a strange mess of democracy, if he had been entrusted with power in any province. His attitude towards those who worked that democracy was most unhelpful. And he has in acquiring power employed the means which are anything but democratic. All this indictment against him is enough to make one feel apprehensive about the future of democracy in his hands. But this unsavoury story does not end here. He has openly heaped contempt on the democratic form of Government. Enemies of democracy have in all countries found it possible to invent some slanderous label, so that they should call the dog a bad name in order, to hang it. To the Nazis democracy is Jewish, because it teaches Germans that in twentieth century they should not live like the dumb speechless masses ruled by the teutonic knights in middle ages. To Pope Pius XII, it is Bolshevik and anti-christian because it permits the communists and socialists to spread ideas of economic emancipation of the workers and peasants: and the liberals to talk about such thing and as marriage lawreform, divorce, Birth Control. To Jinnah democracy is Hinduistic, because it provided the widest opportunity to the Muslim masses to become educated, permits organisation of workers and peasants, so that they

have become formidable force in national politics, and strikes at the root of landed estates which are the chief bastion of the Muslim league. The democracy is objectionable because it gives opportunity to the people to put in power men of progressive and radical outlook. If it could only pave the way for rise of such conservative parties as Hindu Sabha or Leagua the communalists would be very much pleased with it they can always find out some. *Modus Vivinde* with a communalist or a reactionary party, rather than with congress. The most amazing thing about these wild attacks of Jinnah against democracy is that he himself has risen to power among the Musliims due to its existence. If there had been no Round Table conference where Jinnah was able to air his progressive liberal views as opposed to those of the reactionaries like Shaffi, Fazli and Aga Khan, to the delight of enlightened Muslims in this country, he should not have staged a come back in Muslim politics. After that it was in central Assembly as a Parliamentarian that he was able to make himself more popular among the people. Having been himself a product of this democratic age and flourished due to this system he thought perhaps he would not throw it over board. But his present intentions are different. He has no use for democracy unless the electorate everywhere in India return an overwhelming number of league candidates.

But if he is himself out-spokenly hostile to the idea of democracy, the organisation of league is carried on dictatorial lines. On top sits the immovable president who cannot be changed at all. Democratic organisations elect their Presidents every year, but there are no Presidential elections in the league. The league council remains much as before inspite of passage of many years. And just as Hitler or

Mussolini would on some annual rally of their party summon the Gauleiters, the party members and all notable Nazis and Fascists to swear eternal loyalty to the Fuehrer or the Duce, so Jinnah bands together all league leaders at the annual session of the party, and they affirm their confidence in his leadership. There is no opposition in the league no centre, left, or right, but one party, one platform, and one leader. Some time ago Hasrat Mohani tried to constitute a left in the league, on the socialistic lines but his efforts were coldly received by the league high command, and all these leftist ideas had to be dropped by those who on economic and political matters held different opinions from Jinnah. Recently the so-called communists have taken it into their heads that the league is representative of Mussalmans and thought that they might win popularity among its members, and thus modify the league policy in interests of the country. Mr. Ashraf and several others took a step in this direction when they attended the Karachi Session of the league.

But it is doubtful if this effort is likely to prove anymore successful than a similar effort made by Hasrat Mohani sometime ago. There can be no more left inside the league than it could be in British conservative party which at least runs on democratic lines, though it has not much love for democracy. The fate of those people who enter it with good faith to convert it to their progressive outlook is much the same which befell Ramsay Macdonald and his son, Malcolm Macdonald in England, when they allied themselves with the British conservatives. They were turned out of their party with bell, book and candle, and condemned by the people who once respected them. The conservatives first welcomed them with open arms, propped them up for sometime then

ignored them, and followed none of their politic.

There have been many such cases in the league. Mr. Jinnah was himself a man of progressive and liberal outlook when he first led it, but in course of time his liberalism and Nationalism washed off and he is to-day, the full blooded Tory.

Not to speak of the formation of a left inside the league the centre has also been non-existent. Representative Abul Qasim Fazal Haq in his early days of Premiership tried to create such a block inside the league, but he had finally to leave the party, because Jinnah thought that he was bidding for alternative leadership.

As for the difference of opinion which Sikander had with Jinnah, it was not because of functioning of a separate democratic group inside the league. It was because he had joined the league as head of the party, which had great strength among the Punjab Muslims. He was allowed to speak sometimes independently of the leader, because of the large following that he had brought into the league. He could not use that following to change the leadership of the league that was the main basis of Sikander-Jinnah Pact.

This lack of any democracy inside the league, had made it impossible for any of the working class peasant, or youth organisations to make their weight felt inside the league, and change its policy accordingly. While the youth the peasants, and the workers were from 1930, onwards influenced by the conflict between Democracy and Dictatorship, socialism and Militarism, they could hardly articulate their sentiments inside the league. Thus while the congress Foreign policy after 1930, as a result of rallying of public opinion for the cause of



global freedom, became anti-Fascist, because the Fascists were the main enemies of such ideas, the league did not understand what role it had to play in the mighty convulsive changes sweeping all over the world. It did not know on which side of the barricades it stood. In Spain, Abyssinia, China and elsewhere democracy was facing gravest perils, but the league leaders had no words of sympathy for it.

With Palestine Arabs, they did express their sympathy no doubt, but it was because the congress had already done so, and they wanted to impress upon the Indian Mussalmans, that they did not lag behind in expressing sympathy with Mussalmans abroad. They had however expressed only a sentimental religious sympathy with Arabs.....It was not that they understood the international role that Fascism or Imperialism were playing in world affairs. That is why they took the side of the Arabs in the Palestine dispute and freely criticised the Jews. It was not an attitude likely to help Arabs much.

The Palestine problem was full of wheels within wheels. For a truly democratic party, the correct attitude was to disassociate itself from the violence committed by some of the Arabs, express sympathy with the Jews, who had been expelled from Germany, but point out that the troubles of Jews could not be lessened by their troubling the Palestine Arabs, who were right in protesting against infiltration of Jews in that country and demanding independence for themselves. The congress had adopted this attitude. It had upheld the Arab cause without alienating the Jews. It did not fall into the trap laid by the Nazis who were also posing as friends of the Arabs.

Apart from this unhelpful attitude towards Palestine

Arabs, the league never defined its policy on foreign affairs. When the War came, the democratic parties could see clearly the danger of Imperialism, and Fascism, and form their attitude accordingly: the league had only one interest and that was campaign against congress, and in favour of Pakistan.

If the league had also an internationalist outlook and were steeped in anti-fascist tradition, unity between itself and the congress would not have been difficult of achievement. War should have brought the two parties nearer to each other and the Indian tangle could be solved in 1939 or 1940 instead of remaining till now a subject of heated controversy. The war has united various people of divergent outlook, who were till yesterday at loggerheads with each other but are now on the same side of barricades determined to crush the Fascist monster. The communists have united with Tories of the deepest dye. The Czechs and the Poles were estranged before the war because of the annexations of the Czech territory by the Polish Government, but now they are allies against Fascist Germany. Even the Russians and the Poles with long standing differences are avoiding an open breach and maintaining unity against the Nazis. The same thing could happen in India, if only the league were to view the world situation as the congress did.

But the one man inside the league who took any interest in defeating the axis was Premier Sikandar Hyat of Punjab. He hated the Fascists not because he had been like the congress, internationalist from the very outset or believed in ideas of world freedom, including that of India. He could think of India only as a part and parcel of the British Empire. And so far as his anti-Fascism was concerned,

it was due to his sentiments of loyalty towards Britain and his past record of service in the cause of the the Empire. Though he never aired his hostility against congress much as Jinnah did being more interested in practical administrative work than political mud-flinging; there were difficulties enough in an understanding between him and congress even if he could, which is most unlikely break away from the league.

So far as Jinnah was concerned he often bragged that what he was concerned with was Pakistan, and if the British did not give it somebody else who came would, could there be a more defeatist view of the political situation at home?

The man who was thus prepared to barter away the freedom of his country, could scarcely have any love for it. Like the Roumanian, Antonescu who was so mad about getting some territory from Russia that he allowed his country to be overrun by the Germans, Jinnah would not care who ruled India, so long as he had his Pakistan.

Anti-Fascism and love of democracy are complimentary to each other. But Fascism should not be spurned only because it is a menace to one Empire. Hostility against it should be based on ideas of world freedom. Then an anti-Fascist would be a democrat, and vice versa, Jinnah is neither.

To imagine that such a man lording over the ministries, of five provinces could do anythings to stiffen the antifascist front or popularise this cause among the people, and save democracy from the dangers which beset it is a dangerous wartime gamble, which should never have been undertaken. The cause of freedom requires men who

can enthusiastically take up the work of defeating Fascism and establishing democracy. It is unimportant if such men have been in the past dark horses in politics or had not nation wide popularity. If Jinnah had only this drawback one could overlook it. Giraud and De-Gaul were not the idols of people of France before the war.

They have since June 1940 made headway in politics, and risen to National fame. Similarly if Jinnah was not a Gandhi or Nehru, he could become one, provided he had enough enthusiasm for the cause of democracy, and was fired with hatred of Fascism.

That was what he lacked. He is unaware of any special responsibility which the present occasion calls for. He considers the present power only as a stepping stone to Pakistan and can hardly devote much time to the cause of anti-Fascism. Democracy becomes in his hands a play thing he does not value it much-and he has been called to guide the ministries in provinces, where already the activities of league have created no end of confusion. What are his men going to do about these provinces of India, ?

### CHAPTER III.

#### **Muddle In Sind.**

The Provinces which have suffered most as a result of the efforts of the league leaders to save them are Bengal and Sind. In the later, the league intrigues started quite earlier. There have been recurrent crises in this province and the men who now owe allegiance to the league, have changed their political creeds of ten. It is a most fickle crew of men, that ever gained power in the country. In order to know what strange mess of democracy they have made in that province, their activities should be examined from the beginning.

#### **Men And Ministers.**

The pillars of democracy in Sind the desert land have been raised on shifting sands. Badly shaken by many sand storms, this flimsy structure of government which has seen more vicissitudes there than anywhere else in India still survives-though many of those who first entered it are not there. The storms took their toll and while some are missing (in prisons) other's bones lie littered about the place-they died for Democracy. Among them was the brave sentinel of this huge building-Allah Bux, who braved the storm and perished while on duty. Others still live and strut about its dreary weather-beaten and storm-shaken rooms, trying to keep up appearances, and lending a sham heroic air to it, like the prussian army officers, hovering around the tomb of Napoleon in the Paris groaning under the Jack-boots of German Imperialism. And apart from the fact that it has not been occupied by the Nazi marauders, Sind has much in common with that luckless land-France.

*Its gaudy and gay people match the worst specimens of the third republic France, while its middle classes and aristocracy are as much effette and easy going-its politicians compromising and fickle ready to back the wining borse and and altogethar too complaicant and maginot minded about the vast changes that sweep over the rest of country.*

The Sind Assembly is a model of the chamber of Deputies (built on sand), and the complex grouping of the political parties which ultimately was the cause of ruin of of French democracy is a marked feature of this parliament top. In a house of sixty, there are too many parties, and no party having absolute majority coalition governments have been formed and have been frequently changed, as in France after 1930.

The democracy in France after having somewhat rough experience under the Rightests and conservatives which culmiated in famous February Riots in 1935, gradually passed under control of the radicals and socialists after 1933, and Daladier became its Prime-Minister. This man who got another lease of life in 1936 elections ruled France during most of the last days of the third republic. First Prime Minester suffered an eclipse for some time, only to come back again. His counterpart here is Ghulam Hussain Hidayat Ullah, who became Prime-minister after democracy was innaugerated in sind in 1937, was dropped for sometime by the Parliament and is now again ascendant. Whether he is to be the last Premier of Sind before either the Governor " Kicks him out " ( the phrase is his own and he used it for Mr. Allah Bux ) or war clouds burst on India's surface is another chapter. In that case he may prove to be a Daladier, or a Deat or Laval no one knows which. But today he is at the Relm and the most important man in the

province, When we consider the democracy in Sind, we first think of the names which have gone to make it what it is a shamble of ruins. Other provinces boast of notable achievements during this period, made familiar to us through newspapers. About Sind what we know is the names of the men who have from time to time become prominent in public. In connection with recurring parliamentary disputes, these names, which have made news in stand are the key to understand the political pantomime that has been enacted in that province.

Ghulam Hussain, Hidayat Ullah whose name is as long as that of some Balkan Politician like Stoyadinovitch has a similar intriguing personality. Thrown out by Allah Bux in March 1938, he suffered political eclipse for sometime, only to return to charge when he found that Muslim Leaguers and Allah Bux were quarrelling over the interpretation of the Azad Pact. That crisis in Sind Politics gave Ghulam Hussain an opportunity to enter the arena with his dwindling followers and then began that strange marriage of convenience between his faction and Azad Muslims of Allah Bux. The latter when he returned to office rewarded Ghulam Hussain with portfolio of Home affairs. Simple and sincere as Allah Bux was, he thought that others observed the same high code of morality in politics which he did. He was mistaken Ghulam Hussain who had so many times changed boats, in the past, played the trick again and when his chief fell, instead of resigning, calmly stopped in his place. To-day he is a camp-follower of Jinnah, and proud member of the Muslim League, which he reviled upto the time of dismissal of Allah Bux. He has all along played Nationalism to the gallery-back in year 1937, 1938, when Congress was sweeping away the reactionaries and its star was ascendant ; Ghulam Hussain introduced a

good deal of congress programme and posed as champion of the cause of Nationalism. Even when Allah Bux threw him out, he refused to cross over to the league. Apparently he knows that league was not much popular with Sindhi Mussalmans. Once in Allah Bux cabinet Ghulam Hussain out did his chief in lashing out at league. And when Allah Bux resigned and he became Premier in a League dominated cabinet people said all sorts of things about him and accused him of betrayal of Allah Bux and joining the Muslim League. He was in for a bad time with Hindus, Muslim Leaguers and Allah Bux partymen all shouting coarse against him. He stood his ground and said.

"I am an Indian and a Muslim first and everything else afterwards."

Which is as good as if Hitler were to say :—

"I am a German and a Nazi first and everything else afterwards."

If you are an Indian first why not say so why claim to be a Muslim or a Hindu at the same time thus trying to please all, the Nationalists as well as the Mussalmans. As an Indian one has to make certain sacrifices. In politics it is extremely dangerous to associate religion with Nationalism because it ultimately dominates the entire outlook of men and the result is the somersaults of a Mohammad Ali or Aney or Madan Mohan Malviya. And if religion rather than political realities are to be the guiding spirit then why not say "I am a Hindu or a Muslim first and everything else afterwards."

But in case of Ghulam Hussain, these words were merely a cloak to hide his mental confusion (for even the most clever may sometime get lost in a storm of emotions.) It showed



that he was bidding his time and a few days later when the Muslim leaguers were firmly behind him, on a flimsy pretext—that pressure was being put on Hindu Ministers by the public so that they should resign—he declared that he had also a duty towards his community and he wished to see Muslims solidly linked in one block therefore, he joined the Muslim league. He could not be both a Indian and a Muslim. He could be Muslim only and that also as that word, is understood by the Muslim leaguers.

Recently he said in Lahore that politics of Sind shifted their course as the river Indus does. That is true enough. But Indus atleast knows, where it is to end. At its goal it reaches the sea and becomes one with it. Not so Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah. He has no goal before him, but is drifting, like broken reel in the stormy waves of the Indus—Sometime he is lifted high up by the waves and we see him, at other times he is submerged and almost forgotten. And not only he but the entire Sind politics is at present in a state of flux. Sindhis are not only changing their political alliguments frequently, but also do not know where their goal is.

As for the Muslim leaguers they should remember that Ghulam Hussain has served not one master but several and broken loose from all, he was with congress, with Allah Bux with the British with Hindus, and now he is with the league.

It can't last much longer, some body told him at Lahore that tables may be turned again in Sind in future to which he replied that nobody could say anything about future. He is right. He is not sure of himself. That is a fine admission from the lips of a man, who in the same breath boasts of having thirty out of the thirty five Muslim members behind

him. It is not his fault. The uncertainty about future is born out of the fact that the Premiership came to him by a mere fluke. He did not expect it. Only the sudden removal of Allah Bux gave him an opportunity. The zeal he exhibited for the post is only equalled by his enthusiasm in changing his political creed. A man who is uncertain of his future and does not wish to have a steadfast goal before him—for such a man one political party is as good as another. Sind is a land of paradoxes especially in politics. But no leader of eminence there has made as many somersaults as Ghulam Hussain has. The man who steadily piloted his ship in the ebb and flow of the tides in Sind was the late Allah Bux, but for whose support to Ghulam Hussain in 1941 the present Sind Premier might have been languishing in obscurity, remembered every now and then for his past glorious dash to power. But even that glory had dimmed before the eyes of the people who were every day becoming more and more Nationalist minded. He would have remained there in background like several Prussian army chiefs in Germany after the twenties who had distinguished themselves in War but whose star was set at the end of War. Hitler came and brought them in prominence.

Why Allah Bux gave him a lift is not difficult to see. That distinguished statesman and a great patriot had a sentimental trait of character. He wanted his regainer to be as much broadly representative as possible. Besides in 1941, the commercial situation in Sind was so tense, that Allah Bux thought it best to have a Nationalist ministry as soon as possible and did not pause much to think whether in his ranks may not have crept up men who would tomorrow sell out to the league. The welfare of province was dear to his heart. He could easily afford to sit tight for no Ministry could be

formed without his support but he came forward to shorten the period of agonies of Sind by giving her a stable government.

Mir Bundali Tarpur had been forced to resign because he had not kept up his promise to resign voluntarily an arrangement made in presence of M. Azad and called Azad Pact. Allah Bux stepping in his place treated his opponents with the same generosity he had exhibited towards Ghulam Hussain. A few days after assumption of office he asked Sheikh Abdul Majid, who had been a league minister in Mir Cabinet and who offered his co-operation to any government which followed his scheme of Prohibition in Sind in five years (another example of chaotic conditions in Sind politics, where one member of a political party opposed to the Government may co-operate with it) to come into the ministry and co-operate with him. The Sheikh did not, but the incident throws some light on the liberal mindedness of Allah Bux towards people of all parties. It should also nail the lie that has been spread by Muslim league circles that he was opposed to the Unity of the Mussalmans. He tried to achieve as much of it as possible, even at the risk of being hounded out of office, which he latter on was.

Allah Bux's rule, when one comes to think of the herd of fickle politicians who co-operated with him was a remarkable achievement. If his opponents and friends did not play the game well and if he sometime found himself out wilted by them, this should not deter us from praising his services to the ungrateful people of Sind or to rest of the country.

The first Ghulam Hussain ministry fondered on the question of assessment scheme. Allah Bux, stepping in

Ghulam Hussain's place and backed by the congress party who gave their co-operation somewhat grudgingly found out a satisfactory, solution of that scheme. Defeated in 1940 and later elected as finance minister he stabilised the finances of Sind Province. The third time that he was in office he maintained order in Sind in face of growing anarchy. His rigid discipline and drastic punishments of Sind gunmen considerably eased the situation in that province.

In the politics outside Sind he made a prominent place for himself by persistently challenging Mr. Amery about the lack of Muslim support for congress demand. How could they call Muslim league as representative body of Muslims when a considerable part of them was out of it.

All this talk was gall and wormhood to Mr. Amery who had never heard a Prime minister talking in that strain ever since the resignation of congress ministries. When they had gone why was he there? So the Sind governor decided to dismiss him with as little compassion as an autocrat oriental pationate might show in throwing out a grand vizier he had grown tired of.

Mir Bunde Ali Khan Tarpur, the third Premier of Sind during these years of democratic regime was a big landlord, and that is saying much in a province where after Bihar the Peasantry was the poorest and most dispossessed, and a big landlord was considered to be as much lucky as the winner of Derby and Grand Prix though of course he was not so rare.

When Allah Bux fell in 1940 this great estate-owner was asked to form a ministry which he did with the support of Allah Bux and Muslim league. He had no party of his own having to depend on parties of junior ministers to keep him in power. His position resembled that of Ramsay Macdonald in 1933 when he was prime minister without a party and without any

majority, and as sure as Macdonald fell Mir's doom was inevitable. To get him out of this embarrassing situation when his own ministers might one day get rid of him and make any other person as premier, a pact was signed between various ministers at the instance of Abdul Kalam Azad which obliged upon the Mir to resign in mid-February 1941 to be followed by Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah or Allah Bux. The Mir having refused to sign the pact on the understanding that as a gentleman of good stock his word of honour was sufficient—later on went back on his words. So did the other Muslim league members. The great estate owner stuck to his office as he would have to his estate if threatened with expropriation. Having once become Premier he thought like owning the land it was something which was his right and no body could snatch it away from him. The fact was however that he had been hustled into Premiership because he was the only influential man in Sind. Not belonging to any particular group (he later on entered the league but when he became Premier he was an Independent Non-party man) and could thus best maintain a balance between league and Allah Bux group. The astute leaguers who later on won him over whispered in his ears that he should defy the Azad Pact for it was humiliating to vacate office like that. The result was that he suffered defeat. The leaguers could not save him. Some of them, clever people, forgot this disgrace and rose again to great heights in Sind Politics. The feudal landlord brought up in a different traditions where such a fall was considered to be a matter effecting honour, (though of course when personal interests were at stake as in case of fulfilling the Azad Pact this word was understood differently) took his defeat to heart and just as he had previously allowed the Muslim leaguers to prevail on him, after his resignation too he allowed himself to

be allowed out of prominence in Muslim league.

The place Ghulam Hussain occupies to-day rightly belongs to Mir Bunde Ali Khan Tarapur who was the first Sind Premier to owe allegiance to league at a time when that body was not so well-known. But the league did not care for the past services done to it. It thought in terms of power politics, and anastute wire pullers who could reinstate league in power was always welcome to league leaders rather than the influential landlord who had done so much for them. Now that Ghulam Hussain is firmly enshrined in power it is as well to hear. The farewell message of the Mir before he left office :—

"When Sind was in those days of Bloodshed all parties came to me and urged me to be their Premier and I agreed to shoulder this overons responsibility. Within six months I brought peace in the province, and took the extreme step of arresting the Pir of Buchandi which no other Premier would have dared to do. The reward that I am getting is a stab in the back. They conspired and rejected the revenue Budget demands to-day to precipitate a crises.

"K. B. Allah Bux add two Hindu Ministers resigned secretly this afternoon without informing me. My conscience is clear. I did my duty towards Sind."

The reference to all parties coming to him is true enough but the Mir takes a subjective view of it forgetting that what the parties wanted was Independent non-party man to serve as a link between various groups. The "peace and order" story should be taken with a pinch of salt. A good deal of disorder remained in Sind after Bunde Ali was gone. As for Pir of Burchandi he was released a few days before the Mir left office because the leaguers wanted to make political capital out of this event. The "stab in the back" was illusory

for the Mir went back on his words. Anyway it was nothing compared to the "bump on head" which Ghulam Hussain and Muslim leaguers have given him by pushing him into background. As for "clear conscience" of Mir so had Chamberlain. His party men and countrymen threw him out into the rain once clouds burst over England—without an umbrella. So have the partymen of Mir Bunde Ali Tarpur!

Prominent among those "partymen" are G. M. Syed K. B. Khurro, M. H. Guzdar, and Sheikh Abdul Majid of these K. B. Khurro and Sheikh Abdul Majid were in his cabinet and resigned along with him in March 1941. K. B. Khurro has now become a minister again in Hidayatullah cabinet and apparently finds it as good to serve Ghulam Hussain as he did Mir Bunde Ali Tarpur.

G. M. Syed and Guzdar are the firebrands of the party. At a meeting of the Sind citizens called by the party to protest against the newly formed require of Allah Bux in March 1941, said Syed :—

"I am fully convinced that no service to the Muslims of the Sind could be rendered through the Assembly because its constitution was such that Muslim had to depend on the Hindus and congress for undertaking any measure.

People were repeatedly declined that they had no grudge against the Hindus and that they would be protected. I would openly say that I have many complaints against Hindus who are responsible for the present condition of the Muslims of Sind. They have stood in the way of all measures for the uplift of the community. I would warn them that if they continued their present policy they will have to be treated in the same way as Jews in Germany."

Mr. Syed has changed his convictions about the present Assembly. He has found it good enough to grace it with

his presence as a Minister in Ghulam Hussain's cabinet. He has also forgotten his virulence about those Hindus who joined Allahbux cabinet and were making mischief. Those very gentlemen whom he had called jews are his colleagues. He has not treated them as Hitler treated jews in Germany, though he has the habit of that dictator about forgetting his past saying if they do not fit into the new political strategy.

M. H. Gazdar who also led the crusade in that meeting against "Banias whose mischief must be stopped" is now sitting cheek by jowl with the same Banias on the Government Benches in Sind Assembly.

As for Sheikh Abdul Majid who is considered to be the most sure and sensible of Sind Muslim leaguers he was also main speaker at that meeting. Unlike the other speakers he went straight for congress and said :—

"There would be no peace in the Province so long as the present congress party in the Assembly was existing as it was the congress which was responsible for breaking one ministry after the other."

Having said that in the heat of moment he contradicted himself in the next part of the speech saying :—

"The frequent fall of the Ministry is due to the fact that Muslim members do not owe allegiance to any organised party and went out to any party rising to power. For this reason they had formed a league party in the Assembly and had come to an agreement with the Hindus on 21 points. (Whom his colleagues unsparingly denounced). But no sooner had the Mir Ministry come into existence than the congress party started manoeuvring to break the ministry before it had continued in the office for a week."



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If the Muslim members themselves chose to stay away from the Muslim league, and thought it a party of rabid communalists why blame the congress? The congress had at the best a working alliance with them for it thought that interests of country could be best served by joining hands with Allah Bux ministry. The criticism of congress for its help to this progressive group of mussalmans can be made from only one stand point and that was that help given was too little and not too much. One should have liked to see greater co-operation between congress and Azad Muslims as a prerequisite of stability in Sind. It did not therefore lie in the mouth of Sheikh Abdul Majid to speak bitterly about congress.

And even in case of desirability of Mussalmans dancing to the tune of one party (Muslim league) did not Sheikh Sahib went far-ahead the party in matter of his offer of cooperation to Allah Bux if his prohibition scheme was accepted. Besides when Allah Bux resigned and the Muslim leaders G. M. Syed and K. B. Khuro were taken as ministers to the exclusion of Sheikh Sahib he lost no time in branding such a step as treachery to the league, resigned from General Secretaryship of that body and in a press statement let the cat out of the bag by saying that there were other differences between him and the league and one of them was, about league-congress settlement which he had favoured at the risk of unpopularity with his colleagues. This had led to widening of gulf between them, and so he had resigned.

Such was the party discipline for which he yelled a year earlier. His epithets about congress also seem to have meted in thin air.

Obviously he could not help turning to congress in the

end. That was quite sensible. In a province like Sind you cannot have rigid political parties but a working alliance on a radical programme progressive parties. Then why take so long to realise it, and make such giddy rightabout-turns, swallowing what you have said in the past, hook, line, and sinker?

If such is the state of instability of our Muslim compatriots in Sind, who occupy high offices, among Hindus, there is a similar medley. The three Hindu leaders who have frequently graced the ministerial chairs in Sind are Nichal Dass vizarani, Rao Sahib Gokal Das and Dr. Heman Dass. These three gallant gentlemen are obsessed with the same fear which has been responsible for hysteric outbursts of leaders of Frontier Hindu Sabha about trans-border Tribes. These gentlemen make use of outrages against their co-religionists as a peg to hang upon their political ideals, because they owe their existence in public to such *greuilmeldungen* or Atrocity stories against Frontier Tribes. Facts do not justify this biased view. As the Hur outbreak illustrates clearly the Garmen of Sind do not much discriminate between Hindus and Muslims when it comes to a show-down. They lost richmen indiscriminately; more often their unrest as in Prans-border areas of North West Frontier is actuated by anti-British motives. Sometimes it is directed against Hindu money-lenders also, but the Hindu leaders magnify these incidents out of all proportion. And it seems that they can create this "danger against Sind Hindus" as often as they like and then pretend that it is no longer there if their interest can be thus best served. For instance this danger was found to have been particularly great in March 1940 when it was thought best to throw over the Allah Bux ministry of pro-

gressive Mussalmans and have a back-door deal with "Independent" Muslims and Muslims leaguers described by Mir Bunde Ali and Sheikh Abdul Majid as 21 point agreement. Allah Bux was thrown out and Bunde Ali came in and Hindu members were sworn as ministers. In 1941 these people finding their chief Bunde Ali in weak position as a result of an uproar about Azad Pact, unceremoniously and it seems treacherously deserted their new chief and once again backed the winning horse. The Muslim leaguers themselves also responsible for breakdown of Mir Ministry after another. They raised cries of "no quarter to the Hindus" and treat them, as Jews. At the same time they said Hindus could never be safer than in alliance with Allah Bux. Very true they might have as well played patriotism to the gallery by talking about dishonouring of Azad pact. Some of them did, And then to confirm the impression that the Muslim league's "danger to Mussalmans" and Hindus' stories of Muslim atrocities." were all part of a gigantic conspiracy to smash the forces of Nationalism in Sind, in October 1941 these Hindus thought it best to change masters again. Ghulam Hussain Hidayat Ullah was as good as Allah Bux or Mir Bunde Ali Tarpur, R. S. Gokal Dass stressed the great danger to the Hindus. He also seemed to remember the advice of the All-powerful Savarkar who had said that interests of Hindus could be best served by joining the League ministry. Dr. Heman Dass's conscience was also clear, "I have done nothing against my conscience" he said.

Precious things that conscience is in Sind that almost everybody seems to have it "clear" Mir Bunde Ali when his ship went down also said "My conscience is clear". Ask G. M. Syed, K. B. Khurro and Sir Ghulam Hussain

Hidayat Ullah they have it clear also " who said Hindus were jews" ? " Not we "; Messrs Syed and Khurro would say in all innocence,

Clever Ghulam who knows as much about Sind politics as they do has been already saying that he was a friend of Hindus and would hold the scales equal on both sides. But that is an old story. So did the monkey say to the two cats that came to him for judgment.

In spite of this unanimity of views among Sind leaders about their conscience there seems to be a theatrical air about all these assurances for no sooner had Hindu leaders talked about danger to Hindus. Ghulam Hussain said that he was joining the Muslim league as a " matter of duty towards his co-religionists at such a time". As if he were waiting for Hindu Leaders to say such things. All this showed that as in case of the previous scares raised by leaguers and Hindus in order to help each other this one was aimed at strengthening the position of Ghulam Hussain and the two Hindu ministers among their respective communities. A word may be said about Nichaldass Wazirani the other colleague (one was R. S. Gokal Dass) of Allah Bux. He had clung to the diminishing Independent party and refused to give into Ghulam Hussain. Patriotic belief that it was betrayed of Nationalism to aid such people? No like other Hindu ministers of Sind he had also in the past shifted allegiance to several Muslim Chiefs.

Instead of unequivocally condemning the action of his colleagues in the independent party he had given them a mild reproof and said that everybody had the right to act according to his wishes. That amounted to saying

Go ahead and make hay while the sun shines. I am here to cart it out and take it to market. Let us divide our sphere to work. You go in the Cabin and I will stay out so that that the Independent party may hitch its bandwagon to some other star if that of Ghulam Hussain is once set".

That is how they maintain the facade of unity behind cracked surface in Sind. The Hindu and the Muslim leaders they all follow the same strategy. They shout for defence of their communities, rigid discipline big parties and when they don't have them they pretend as if nothing were wrong and they have something new to defend at least assailed by progressives from all sides their ministerial posts.

## II

### Parties and Principles

If the Ministries change complexions like chameleons in Sind and the ministers are an irremovable clique of politicians why don't the parties assert their power throw over the old leadership and start afresh? The answer to it is that in Sind Parties are creations of ministries, and not the reverse. There were no political parties of note before the rot set in Sind in 1938 when ministries began to tumble down one after another. The only party which had any solid if somewhat meagre following in Sind was the Congress party with its Ten members. They fought elections on the Congress programme and lacking the majority had refused to share the responsibility of government with Ghulam Hussain other parties which could not be described as political parties in the modern sense of the word for their members never formed any well knit organisation before the elections were the followers of Sir Ghulam Hussain

who constituted the strongest group in Assembly. Five odd members of Muslim League, three Europeans, and some ten twelve Hindu members who had also like followers of Ghulam Hussain formed a party after getting elected to the legislature, for lack of any other name and imagining that independence was just then the fashion, these Hindu members called themselves "Hindu Independents". They thought that by assuming such title they could hide their identity and like Ghulam Hussain easily pass off as progressive group not within the congress yet very much near it. They evidently hated to be dubbed communalists which they were for they had won election on hair creeping stories of the dire results that awaited the Sind Hindus, if the Muslims got power. They instead called themselves "Independents" to lend respectable appearance to their party so that they should pass off as patriots.

It may be argued that Sind was a small province, separated from Bombay, and one which had never had any Parliamentary experience. The smallness of the house did not encourage formations of big parties and electoral system had been such that power tended to fall in hands of certain groups which did not represent any political philosophy but were merely there because they were landlords, business interests Pirs etc., that in any bigger province the proper place for them would have been an upper chamber where they should have been quite noisy like U. P. Taluqadars but would have found themselves helpless in face of a strong lower house. All this is true enough. The electoral System is defective. But surely that is over simplifying the issue. Once the members are elected, they should know where they stand, owe allegiance to one group if they have not done before and try

to strengthen it making it less amenable to influence of certain persons at the top and more democratic in complexion having certain fixed ideals to guide it in Parliamentary life. What happens is that as soon as the elections are over most of the Muslim members like a tribal gang follow the lead of the most influential of the tribal leaders, in this case Ghulam Hussain who had already assembled a good many of his followers around him, some of them having fought the elections flourishing his name before the Muslims as their best saviour. Ghulam Hussain becomes Premier. The Hindus support him—they have also grouped themselves under some leaders vaguely believing that critical times lay ahead of Hindus and having only the haziest idea of their future path.

But clearly such a state of affairs could not last for long. Men who are thus carried forward to premiership on a wave of popularity must either stabilise their position themselves forcibly exterminating all opposition as Hitler did when he became all of a sudden *Reichkanzler* in Germany in 1933 or perish and be forgotten like a Brüning or Von Papen (who still functions in German political life but without the old position). Ghulam Hussain could not take the path of Hitler. He had still some following and could not vanish into nothingness like Brüning. Instead he played the role of that intriguing Papen but unlike that luckless Prussian Baron lived to come back to the post of Premier.

For the present we are interested in the new feature introduced in Sind Politics by his fall in 1938—it was the formation of parties, and frequent changes in them as the ministries changed. Sind was now split up and the fight was on not for this party or that or some political principles, but for individuals whom their friends backed. There were three



factions among Hindus three among Muslims. Left Right and Centre.

Left congress, centre Hindus for Allah Bux. Right Hindus for Ghulam Hussain or any one who would have them.

Similarly Muslims, left-Allah Bux centre Ghulam Hussain and Right Muslim league. These divisions resemble those among French Radicals, Socialists and Nationalists all of whom are split up in three, four and even more factions.

The Sind deputies had atlast some work to do and that was backing up their favourite as the Minister, when the axe was applied to someone else and the heads rolled down. It was all a question of having as many friends about you as possible. Every minister could count on some supporters who would stand by him if worst came to worst and if it so happened that he found for some time his interests identical with those of some others simultaneously assailed by their opponents, then the ground was set for the fight in which success may come to him. Thus after 1938, a schoolroom atmosphere was introduced in Sind Parliament and there was feverish activity to prop up one's friends as against some bad boy who had licked one of them and had to be licked back. It was in such a state of affairs that Maulana Azad stepped in Sind politics to heal the breach between various parties and enable Sind to have a stable regime. He thought that if Premiers could be made or unmade with mutual consent all would be well. He therefore decided that Ghulam Hussain should become Premier in Sind in mid-February when Mir Bundahali Tarpur should resign. The Mir agreed to it in presence of K.B. Khurro G.M. Syed and Nichal Dass Wazarani, who signed the agreement, while Mir did not sign it and his word of honour was considered sufficient. This "AZAD" agree-

ment the best solution of Sind Tangle was denounced by all those who signed it and thus politics again reverted to a state of flux.

Jinnah and Savarkar appeared on the scene, and fished in troubled waters. They wanted to strengthen hold of their parties in Sind.

Jinnah or Savarkar cannot hope to succeed where Azad whom they both detest failed. Azad good old soul, never tried a *gleichschaltung* of all parties of Sind with Congress. What he wanted was a working alliance which should keep the integrity of individual parties intact and avoid friction in Parliamentary work. What are these two gentlemen (Jinnah and Savarkar) after and what do they want to achieve by hooking into troubled waters of Sind? It is hegemony of their parties in Sind politics to the exclusion of all progressive forces. Savarkar and Jinnah both find that matters have moved in Sind according to their satisfaction. But last word has not been said yet.

And what has emerged out of the state of flux in Sind since the breach of Azad pact is not a greater Hindu Sabha or a greater league. On the surface it seems as if the long friction among Sindhis is over and the Mussalmans of Sind have joined one party-Muslim league. Ghulam Hussain speaking at Lahore claimed that 30 out of 35 Muslim members of Sind were with him. Clever fellow! he did not say that they were the league. And there is the rub.

The league in spite of the "Baptism" into it of several strayed Mussalmans like Ghulam Hussain remains, what it was in 1937, when it had under ten members. Not one in a thousand electorates who voted for league in 1937 ever imagined that it could ever rule Sind. The electorates remain in the last resort the touchstone of popularity of a party.

If the Muslim leaguers or for that matter Hindu Independents inside the Sind Assembly are sure that their all out campaign for league and Sabha respectively has the backing of people, why not dissolve the present house and go to polls on league and sabha ticket and see how they fare? If Ghulam Hussain finds league, so attractive to-day why did he not fight on its ticket in 1937? His constituents expected him to form a progressive Nationalist ministry and not trail after communal bodies.

Without any result of bye-elections in favour of league before us and the fact that this body had only a few elected representatives in 1937 in Assembly, to call the present league Assembly party democratic or representing the wishes of the people would perhaps be offensive to league members also for they have always reviled the Assembly in their utterances. The leaguers do not believe in democracy. But some idea of how far popular they are with the people of Sind can be had from the fact that the leading municipalities of Sind in most of which elections were held after 1937, are in hands of their opponents-congress or other progressive parties. In 1941 the league strongholds of Jacobabad, and Larkana were wrested from the hands of the leaguers and the municipal elections resulted in Congress Victory.

The present majority in the house is nominal—the league and Sabha members are much like those National labour members of parliament who in the hayday of Macdonald's is career were much heard of in Parliament. Just as the National labour members did not enjoy respect of the people, the same is true of league members of Assembly.

The National Labour were never heard of afterwards. The same fate awaits Muslim leaguers. Time has been helpful to Ghulam Hussain as it was to Macdonald and his band of

national labour members. There were serious economic crises in England in 1931—1933 and people thought more about unemployed, distressed areas and less about what tricks were resorted to behind the scenes by the Ministerialists to keep themselves in power. They were interested in economic measures and temporary relief such as doles helped to keep them satisfied for sometime. In India the Congress leaders are in prison. At such a time and without anyone to unmask their deeds many a lily-livered politicians have sneaked into arms of moderate parties. It is no longer pleasant for Sir Ghulam Hussain and several of his followers to pose as Nationalists. The men who were prepared to go any length with congress in 1937-38 faltered in 1942. They were no longer friends of congress. They instead let loose a campaign of calumny against the congress telling the people that it had plunged them in misery and they were its real helpers.

In politics such a playing of philanthropic role by enemies of the country is always possible when the friends of the people happen to be far off. The Kerensky regime in Russia owed its popularity to this sort of make-believe patriotism. But parties thus built seldom last long. The Muslim league party in Sind Assembly is no more subservient to Jinnah than Democratic party in America is to Roosevelt. There are rebels lurking here and there bidding their time. Good old Sheikh Abdul Majid must have by this time thought that if Sind was to have a predominantly league ministry why should not he be its Prime Minister instead of that "Upstart" who was till yesterday bitter enemy of league. "Why not throw him out. We are strong enough to rule singlehanded" etc. etc. While Syed or Guzdar might be impatient of Hindus or vice versa. And the opposition strength to-day is not less than, twenty (ten congress Five

Muslims whom Ghulam Hussain could not win and atleast as many recalcitrant members of Hindu Independent party who for all we know may throw their weight with the winning side once the present ministry falls). So any day these big parties which they have built up without any common ideals to sustain faith in each other, except the comforting thought that congress is down and out so make hay while the sun shines—may crack and the old state of affairs return in which all groups were wide-spread. That is hardly a comforting thought. It would be very much worse than what it is to-day. The British want for the duration a government in Sind which would implicitly obey the governor and that Ghulam Hussain—faithful old councillor of dyarchy days can be trusted to do. The joke of league ministry with only a microscopic number of electorates having voted for league in the General Election must remain for a longtime yet.

### CHAPTER III.

#### Pirs and Patriots.

Pirs play an important role in Sind. While the political power is shared by a group of politicians administering affairs from cities the Pirs are the masters of the country side. They have immense following which includes cabinet ministers, M.L.A's. and high officials of government. Some of them are fabulously rich, have big estates and play the dual role of landlords and spiritual heads of a vast community. The latter role saves them from a good deal of trouble at the hands of their tenants which they must face in such a land as Sind where the peasants are very much impoverished and restless and liable as elsewhere to turn against the landlords. Pirs' holy hand restrains the revolt of the underdog. Having made themselves easy about their estates these Pirs meddle

Politics and from behind the scenes exercise great influence over the ministers. Their restless peasants find an outlet for their rebellious spirit in lootings and decoities disorders and murders, which are sometime directly instigated by the Pirs, keep their hold on certain ministers and at others, tacitly encouraged by them, and the culprits often shielded. As usually Hindu money lenders happen to be the richest persons in the locality near by, they are the victims of such raids. The hungry and landless peasants who participate in them do not do so as a religious crusade unless so told by the Pirs who do use such weapons sometime to gain popularity among the people or influence in the government. But not all Pirs are anxious to maintain their hold in Political world. Some of them hate double crossing and if their followers clash with the government they become implacably hostile to the regime and devote themselves fanatically to the task of resisting it. Pir Pagaro represents this latter tradition. Leader of the Hurs and charged by the government for complicity in that crime he was executed recently in teeth of opposition from all quarters seeking a reprieve for him. This spiritual head of a vast community in Sind learned to hate the British as Faqir of Ipi did. Long after the Hurs were outlawed and chased all over the province, he remained at large. It is fantastic to assume that from the very beginning the Hur movement was an anti-British move calculated to subvert the government. The indiscriminate shooting by Hurs after derailing the train and the looting they indulged in showed that their motives were entirely mercenary. It was only later on that the movement developed into organised raids that have been the frequent feature of activities of the Transborder Tribes.

How far the brain of Pir Pagaro was behind such a move is difficult to say but by executing the man, the government have made the hero of a bandit. This execution together

with mass shootings of Hurs has diverted the attention of the people from the ghastly savagery exhibited by these murderers when they derailed the Karachi Mail last year and shot dead in cold blood innocent men and women.

The cause of the patriots in Sind has not been in any way helped by the exploits of Pir Pagaro or his followers. As a matter of fact Allah Bux spared no pains to eradicate this evil but it were not the patriots who made a martyr of the Pir. The Sind administration has in the past allowed the Pirs a free hand in their counter-revolutionary activities against progressive forces.

For ages the Pirs have steered clear of the activities of the nationalist forces. Priesthood, means wealth, privilege, and power over the people acquired not by ability but by a systematic demoralisation of the people, by robbing them themselves and conniving at their robbing others. The priests are the friends of the privileged classes. Mir. Bunde Ali Khan who is a Sayyed and has himself a vast following boasted that he arrested Pir of Berchandi, which no other ministry could dare to and it was he who stopped disorders in Sind. The Mir was right for the Pirs could allow themselves to be lorded over only by another Pir, who, they knew whatever happened would stand by them. And that the Mir did for he released Pir of Berchandi, a few hours before he relinquished office thus leaving Allah Bux to face this hornets nest. As if there could be any doubt about the alliance of the reactionary politicians with the Pirs, the son of Pir of Berchandi participated in league demonstrations against Muslim Ministers joining Allah Bux and Yusuf Haroon publicly congratulated the Mir for having released the Pir.

Pir Pagaros of the past were allowed to act in the way they thought best. Their disturbances gave an opportunity to Muslim leaguers to come forward and in name of law and

order occupy ministerial posts, while the Hindu leaders also exploited the situation to their own advantage and joined hands with league. This drama continued for quite a long time, but with the worsening of economic and political situation in the country, the law-breakers not content with robbing money lenders, started derailing trains and the frontal clash with the Government began. The result was that Pirs here and there abandoning their old alliance with reaction thought it best to trickle into the camps of the progressive people.

Still the major part of these Pirs remains wedded to reaction. They will not step down their gilded thrones. Like their brothers in Spain and Russia they form the backbone of the parties of the Right which at present dominate in Sind. The Spanish republicans had a fair sprinkling of catholic priests on their side in the later stages of war, of such there may not be any dearth in Sind too, who have joined hands with people. But they are not influential; those with big holdings stay out and train their armies of malcontents to hit at the right time like the Hurs and create disorders. What hope of a lasting peace there could be in Sind, so long as these Pirs remain in possession of such vast private armies in form of followers, who would sacrifice their lives for the holy dignitaries?

The head of Pir Pagaro most *sauve* and retiring of all Pirs has rolled, for moral responsibility in Hur revolt. But the real trouble makers remain at large. The Government of the Right shields the Church and its vast armies in Sind. Instead of any inquiry into the economic and political cause of such disturbances, which might implicate some of their colleagues and which might lead to rolling of many heads of Pirs friendly to them, the ministers sitting on treasury benches, take a complacent view of the situation. A democ-



atic regime in Sind must aim at ending of privileges of the priests but it could never be a party to a systematic annihilation of one part of this sect, to the exclusion all other priests. This brings us to the opposition offered to the priests by the patriots. Perhaps Allah Bux wanted such a bold policy ; he always used a strong hand to suppress such troubles.

One thing is clear and that was that he was the bitter enemy of the League-Sabha-Priesthood alliance, and if he had lived he would have never allowed the alliance to become firm as it is today. It were these three groups which feared his remaining as Premier and knew that their privileges would end soon if he remained in power.

Titles had been returned in past by several people and nobody had objected to it. The " Daily Gazette " pointed out that Rabindra Nath Tagore, S. Subrahmanya Aiyer Ex-Chief Justice of Madras High Court had both returned their titles and the Government had never taken any action against them. While " Bombay Sentinel ", declared that Governor Dew had serious differences with Premier Allah Bux about appointment of his nominees to certain high offices. That the quarrel had dragged on for sometime, and after the Assembly had been taken into his confidence by the Premier, the matter was referred to whitehall. All this had not been forgotten either by the Governor or by the Viceroy who took action against him when all the congress M. L. A. were in prison.

Apart from Sind Governor Mr. Amery was also displeased with Allah Bux.

Allah Bux had repeatedly challenged Mr. Amery, when he said that the muslims were behind the league, and they wanted Pakistan.

The British, statesmen, in dropping this man who had devoted the best part of his life in trying to bring about a

compromise between them and the congress, have once again proved how lightly they value the services of their real friends. They dropped him unceremoniously at a time when the entire parties of the right were up in arms against him. So this man stepped out of the Government house in the land of the G'man, deserted by those whose hold in Sind he had stabilised and lacking any direct link with the patriots, who were behind the bars and who could not come and bring a cordon round him in order to save him from the J'men lying in ambush round every street corner. The patriots had a duty towards this man, because he was a patriot, himself and had always upheld the cause of congress; the British had been saved by him in most difficult times, but they left him as Cardinal Wolsey was left by Henry VIII.

From the day Allah Bux left Government house his isolation was complete. It was not the old days that wherever he should go congress should present addresses to him. From his day of resignation he lived the life of one who had been suddenly forced out of limelight into obscurity. Every now and then he would dash out of Sind to Delhi or elsewhere to join in the chorus of the Voices of Azad Muslims raised against Amery or Jinnah or both and for the rest of time he would remain in Sind, where he was like a prophet unhonoured in his land. Before his very eyes they destroyed the edifice of the proud united Sind that he had so assiduously built up. One by one they tore away from him all those people who had for long been his fellow travellers in the steady progress made towards democratic Government. They had been picked of many of them to prisons others to Government benches. It was clear to see Allah Bux was living in an unfriendly atmosphere. He was far away from the old society which he had tried to

ould in his time according to his radical ideas and he could not be identified with the new. Then one day they took him the G'men of Sind who had become quite numerous again after the coup and shot him dead. The Government is trying to trace out the murderer some men suspected of the crime have been arrested and are being tried. Recently it was pointed out that some Hur had murdered him and the police were investigating it. This surmise may be true. He was the man who dealt with Hurs in a determined way and if it was the bullet of a Hur which took his life, that group of cut throats should be hunted like a vermin. The Hurs could no doubt see that Allah Bux had been deserted by the people. They could never understand the depth of patriotic sentiments of this man nor could they believe that Allah Bux had dealt with them justly and had taken a middle way neither eulogising them as heroes nor allowing them to fall victims to sepression. For those primitive people he was the enemy on their death list and he must be removed.

And it is also likely they may have nothing to do with the crime, and it may be the work of some other G'men followers of Sind Pirs, who had been liberated by the new regime and went about the high ways, unrestrained. In any case it should not be considered as an act of some demagogued individuals displeased with Allah Bux's policy. It should not be surprising that a big conspiracy behind the scenes had been made to do away with this man. Only an independent enquiry can reveal the real culprits of this ghastly outrage.

Allah Bux's murder introduces a new element in Sind politics or rather it is only a daring re-hash of the past exploits of the G'men in Sind.

A hushed silence reigns over the Sind Assembly as it does over the province. Both look like a graveyard. "I have

not made Sind a grave-yard" Ghulam Hussain would say, "the gunmen have and I am doing everything possible to end that trouble". Very well, then but the grave yard appearance of the Sind Assembly is atleast his responsibility. What can a parliament be without a lively opposition functioning inside it? Rightly or wrongly the belief is gaining ground that Ghulam Hussain's regime has been a coup of the Rightists that disorders in Sind are being connived at by government. Why not lift the veil over this mystery and let the ministry face the House. That alone can ease the tension, and mark the beginning of democracy instead of the G'men rule in Sind prevailing at present.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### The Eastern Fringe of Pakistan.

While Sind became such a heartbreak house as a result of machinations of the league, the conditions in the Eastern fringe of Pakistan-Bengal and Assam were comparatively better. The redeeming feature in these areas was the great strength of congress. While in Sind there were only ten congress members of Assembly in Bengal the congress Assembly party was the strongest single group in the Chamber. The process of making and unmaking of ministries carried on in Sind by the league could not be repeated in Bengal. The ministries and Assembly members were not a fickle crew either that they should frequently change their political alignments.

The Bengali had also a sense of patriotism ingrained in him since the days of the partition of Bengal whether he may be a Hindu or a Muslim, he considered that he could not become a tool of a group of communalist agitators. He has always liked to follow the leaders of Bengal rather than

those outsiders who want to create disunity among the people of his province, and separate one section of people from the other. This has been true since the days of Bepin Pal, Arbindo Ghosh and C. R. Dass. After Dass, Subhas Bose was acknowledged leader of Bengal. So long as he remained in India, till 1939, he was able to prevent the onslaughts of the communalists. The league was in power no doubt, but it would scarcely make any anti-national move or create chaos as had been done in Sind.

Even after Bose's departure, Abul Kasam Fazul Huq inspite of all his faults and mistakes maintained a stable regime in Bengal. The province was not given over to the menace of Gunmen like the Hurs or Famine in his term of office. Representative Huq has proved to be a true son of Bengal by lining up with the congress when he saw that democracy, and peace were threatened in province.

But inspite of these redeeming features some of ugly defects of the body politic in Sind could be observed in Bengal also. The European group which created a good deal of trouble in Sind Assembly by associating itself with the league malcontents, was also active in Bengal and was much more numerous. So long as Abul Kasam Huq kept aloof from congress, the Europeans group supported him, but when he saw that his place was with the nationalists power or no power the same party turned against him and supported his rival Khawaja Srr Nizam-ud-Din.

Like the Pirs in Sind, the Bengal Europeans are intensely conservative and opposed to all democratic parties. They are big business men and have ideas of this class in their head. Their attitude towards Indian Parliamentary Government could be best judged from the following pronouncement in early 1942 by the "fabulously wealthy, Anglo-Oriental, croesus, Sir Victor Sassoon," who had banking interests all

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over the far East :—

" A state of emergency should be declared. All powers ought to be handed by the Secretary of state to the Viceroy, and all redtape cut away.

" In these times of total War, all liberties of democratic countries must be put in pawn until the day of victory arrives."

One wonders if these ideas could be tolerated even in England. In any case Sir Victor should have tried that sort of stuff first in his own country. It is a pity that Sir Victor's Voice was ignored. So far as he was concerned he had suggested how best the clock could be put back in India. Commenting on his reactionary outburst, the British " News Review " had said :—

" It was hard to see what banker Sasoon had in mind unless it was martial law,, considering that in September 1939, an amendment to the India act was rushed through the House of commons giving the Viceroy the last word in every political question. Throughout the war, rule has been strictly in the hands of his executive council. Those who gave vent to disapproval of its policy were sent to gaol.

" It was easier to understand the motives which inspired Sir Victor's clarion call. The political temper of India had risen to fever heat.

" Eleven years ago Bombay was electrified by an announcement that the millionaire baronet, shaken by the possibility of self-rule for India, was proposing to transfer his immense business affairs to China."

" In fact the existing interests of E. D. Sasoon and Co, rooted for centuries in Bombay remained there, but Sir Victor, made most of his new ventures in Shanghai.

" He had a hunch that the writing was on the wall

The "Red" menace be complained in 1928 was "sapping Indian Industry". The "hand of the Moscow intriguer" was at work, stirring up strikes in the textiles industry (one of his own fields of enterprise) and elsewhere,

Sir Victor did not like the way things were working even then. He did not like it at all. It was just too bad for a family which had gone all the way from Baghdad original home of the Sasoon dynasty to find itself faced with soaring costs of production and an importunate demand for higher wages.

Sir Victor has much in common with European businessmen, in Bengal. A part from an increasing distaste of democratic Government, he sees Red menace in every move of the labour. The Bengal Europeans who are also not happy about the activities of jute workers would agree with him about "Red menace".

However other Indian vested interests in Bengal are also afraid of the "Red menace". These are the landlords. They have backed up the league. They are also conservative and bound to the Bengal Europeans.

These are the two factors which helped the league in Bengal. The third is the utterly silly attitude of Hindu Sabha. One should not judge that organisation from the utterances of Shyam Parshad Mukkerjee who it seems hardly fits into that reactionary party. Mukerjee has progressive outlook and love of democracy, and anti-Fascism is deep-rooted in them. His courage in voicing his Nationalist views in a party noted for its anti-Nationalism is praiseworthy.

However in Bengal as in Sind, Hindu Sabha has strengthened the hands of the league by a campaign of scare-mongering. In both provinces in the past communalism had never been popular and there is no doubt that if Hindu

Sabha had restrained itself from hysteric outbursts about danger to Hindu life and property, the campaign of Muslim league for Pakistan would have been a still-born child. Good sense would have prevailed with the Sindhis, as with Bengalis and they should not have deviated from the past patriotic tradition. The scare mongering of Hindu Sabha about Pakistan made the average Mussalman think that if die-hard Hindus were opposing it so much, there must be something good in the scheme, so why not try it?

If Hindus begin a vociferous campaign about their life and property being in danger, and Hindu Sabha becomes notorious in a province, banding together quite a large number of people, it is idle to expect that Muslim league could be prevented by the congress from becoming powerful; however great the hold of congress be among the people. This prominence of league may be short-lived but it would be inevitable. Bengal, N. W. F. P., and Sind's examples are a stern warning in this direction. Hindu Sabha could not escape responsibility for making league ascendent there.

And when a calamity like famine befalls the province the sufferers are Hindus as well as Muslims. Though of course a few on top such as the European business men, the landlords, the Hindu Sabhaites, people responsible for handing over Bengal to league may not feel the effect of the famine devastating the entire country. But the masses do feel it. Now we have the queer spectacle of Sabha leaders denouncing the Government for its policy about food situation. It does not lie in their mouth to condemn the Government which they put into power by their scare-mongering campaign against Pakistan.

So far as the present league Government is concerned, it could not end the food crises. When Haq was quietly pushed out of office the food crises had begun to loom



large over Bengal. At such a time of danger to the province the best course for the league and other opponents of Abul Qasam Fazal Haq, was to sink differences and try to save the province. A Government of Union ~~sacre~~ should have been formed in Bengal consisting of all parties, Haq was not averse to such a move. He would have gladly broadened the bases of the Government, if the attitude of league were helpful. The Europeans who have shown concern for Bengal famine should have rendered every possible assistance at that time to the Bengal Premier. Instead what happened was that the food situation was considerably exaggerated by the opponents of Haq regime and they raised the ghost of famine to push that Government out. The Ghost having been awakened once now abides, and refuses to be laid to rest. The famine which was then a false cry has become a reality, so that the leaguers who were panicky about it, even then, have been alarmed so much that they have failed to devise any remedy to stop it. They are adroitly shifting the blame on to the shoulders of the Central Government. Here again they are exaggerating their differences with the centre. The latter might have made some mistakes. It is not constituted in a democratic way. But did not Haq complain against it, when he was Prime minister, and yet, the leaguers, the Europeans, and their allies had never collaborated then with the Premier, or backed him up. The league case boils down to this, they have very little power. They want Pakistan right now so that they should be able to end the famine. But they forget that when they were not in office, they wanted only to be put there, to end famine in Bengal. Now that they have got that power they are demanding more and when they have got that they would demand still more. They love power and that is their only aim instead of establishing a Volkstat or people's state.

The leaguers may say that if Provincial autonomy is so good, then why don't the congress leaders try it again? Why do they stand aloof, demanding more power? The congress is asking power not to establish a regional state in one part of the country, but a state comprising all India, including the territories of the Princes. In that state the provinces would have wide powers but it would be knit together by a Central Government and one province would cooperate with another in all matters. The regional state of the league rules out possibility of such a co-operation because they are out to establish it regardless of the wishes of the other people. If they succeed which is doubtful, they would hardly get that co-operation, themselves non co-operating with the rest of India.

Thus their demand for greater power is not due to any desire of strengthening the democracy but instead establishing a regional dictatorship. The condition of the province would remain much the same.

To sum up then these excuses of lack of power are hardly convincing. The chaos continue in the Eastern fringe of Pakistan, the Government has failed to win the confidence of the people. Party manoeuvring has prevented it from joining hands with the representatives of the people inside the assembly and getting co-operation of all.

So far as the outside co-operation is concerned, the Bengal government is getting it. Punjab has supplied it with large stocks of wheat, but the Red tape and corruption prevents the food reaching the hungry mouths of the people. The Bengal Government is unable to explain why inspite of such heavy imports starvation continues.

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lacks is the will. It has never realised that Bengal is next door neighbour of Japanese Burma, and threatened with invasion. It is concerned with increased power rather than ending the menace of Fascism. If it thought the fascist danger to be acute, it would not have continued party bickering while the enemy lay in ambush. It would have ended differences within, got whatever co-operation it could from other provinces, and instead of quarrelling with Central Government set to the task of ending famine in Bengal. Lack of anti-Fascist spirit and hatred of democratic methods of ending crises by co-operation of the people and their representatives is the cause of failures of league Government.

The other part of the Eastern fringe of Pakistan, Assam has not been ravaged by famine. But it has not been immune from league activities. Like Bengal it has found here the same allies. The Europeans are an influential group in Assam too. Here their vested interests are centred over the tea plantations. They are usually at loggerheads with the labour which they employ. A progressive ministry with on democratic outlook would no doubt interfere in the labour-capital disputes in the province if ever the rights of labourers are threatened. The vested interests in Assam as elsewhere do not like it. Hence the Europeans alliance with league in Assam to keep congress out of power. But it is not only the labour-capital disputes which threatened to destroy the peaceful atmosphere of Assam. The grave danger of Japan is more acute here than in the sister province of Bengal. Chittangong is the most bombed city in India, and with enemy thus poised for attack from sea, as well as land Assam, needs not a Government of one party relying on the backing of some business interests but of all parties to stiffen the morale of the people. It would be silly to assume that with Japan held up in Burma, the danger of invasion to Assam

is removed. The threat in case of this province has no more ended than it has in case of England, which inspite of the fact that heavy blows are being delivered against Germany in the East as well as the west is still in danger of Nazi invasion. The Nazis as well as the Japs if cornered are capable of any number of mad dogacts. Now that they are reeling back in the south west Pacific under heavy blows of General MacArthur they might stake everything in a break through in this area. But if a democratic Government composed of all elements of people is in power then such a danger can be effectively met however surprising the Jap move may be.

There is one more development which requires the attention of a people's all parties Government in Assam and that is the opening up of new air route to China. Assam is now linked up with China by air. This air route would prove after the war as much useful in maintaining contact with China, as it is doing to-day, when Americans are taking big supplies to China in their aircraft. Then the civilian flying could be developed by the Government, and an air line with China established. It would be therefore to the interests of any popular Government to encourage this enterprise carried on by our allies so that when the war ends, the people should make best use of this air line.

But once a popular Government in Assam has begun to mobilise the public opinion for Home defence or contact established with China through new air lines these plans could be elaborated. Assam's people, doughty fighters as they are could carry war into Jap territory. Commando raids of the Diaple type could be carried out by the sons of the soil, against the Jap port of Akyab, once they have Government of their own to direct them. There is no reason why warfare in Assam should be in that case limited to defensive action.

But all this the league Government in the Eastern fringe of Pakistan, which is near the Western most fringe of Japanese Empire could not do if it is left to itself or its allies. It must be so reconstituted as to become representative of the people over which it rules.

## CHAPTER V.

### Punjab and the Northwest

The parties which form the backbone of the league in Punjab are slightly different from those in Bengal, Assam, and Sind. The European business interests, so powerful in the Eastern fringe of the Pakistan are negligible in Punjab. Sind is dominated by Pirs, but in Punjab apart from, Multan and to some extent the districts bordering the frontier province, the Pirs have no political influence. The landed interests which are prominent supporters of league in Bengal and to a lesser extent in the other two Muslim provinces have great influence in the league here too. Indeed they are the main pillars of the league in this province.

The commercial class among Muslims in urban areas also backs up the league. And finally among those who have encouraged its growth in this area, we must mention the name of the Hindu Sabha and the Akalis. The former has been here as elsewhere obsessed with the idea of Muslims being a danger to Hindu interests, and by its persistent campaign of Panic-mongering on these lines, it has made line up of Muslims in the league possible. The same is true of the Akalis whose rank and file is patriotic consisting as it does of the masses of the villages with traditions of sacrifice in the service of the Country but these people have no voice in high councils of the Akali leaders, who have established a dictatorship of the most ruthless kind and are playing a game

of backing the both horses Congress as well as league. There are men in the Akali High Command, who one day back up the democratic Congress the other day conservative, and near-fascist league.

But if the elements which are the mainstay of the league in this province are somewhat different from those in the provinces of Sind, Assam and Bengal, the cause of democracy is not much helped, for democratic ideas are not rooted among any of these people. The landed interests and the Akalis are like the Pirs of Sind, and landlords of Bengal not much inclined towards democracy. The feudal spirit of loyalty of the clan to the chief is strong among them, and is reflected in first their unstinted loyalty towards their leaders (without even subjecting them to democratic criticism) and then towards the Empire which they serve, without asking it to apply democracy to India.

The vested interests among the Hindus who are hostile to the league because of the panic among them about their own interest have very little love for democracy either, unless it aims at maintaining their privileges intact, and for this purpose they are willing to bargain even with the league leaders.

The Congress, which has here neither the dominating voice as in Bengal, nor the backing of great numbers of Nationalist Muslims which it enjoys in Sind, ploughs a lone furrow with a few members in Assembly anxious for the functioning of democracy in a province, where precisely no one cares for it.

The result of it is not any frequent parliamentary crises which are along with internal disorder the prominent feature of political life in Sind, nor famine, which has ravaged Bengal, nor the danger of Jap invasion, and utter unpreparedness for it, which one observes in Assam—Punjab is saved from all

these crisis but democracy has visibly deteriorated. Precisely because we had a stable ministry, a bumper harvest every year and no immediate threat of Jap invasion. Punjab should have made great strides towards progress in the democratic regime. Such a well-fed (and well dressed) province, should be well-educated too. Illiteracy should have been banished from its surface. Large scale land reform introduced. The powers of vested interests in urban areas curtailed in interests of the community ; in short there should have been atleast war time socialism comparable to that in Great Britain to-day where inspite of tory opposition, steps have been taken in this direction. If there were ever conditions ripe in a province for democratic planning it was Punjab. But this province instead of leading others in progress, leads them in being the most notorious for its communal spirit and disunity among Hindus and Mussalmans. The unity which has been maintained here for centuries, which survived the days when all India was rent into several parts, and various factions led by Hindu and Muslims Princes, after the break up of the Mughal Empire were flying at each other's throats, has vanished overnight, and all because a sentimental urdu poet started the ball rolling by putting forward suggestion of vivisection of his country into several parts. Our century has produced some very great poets like Day, Lewis, W. H. Auden, Rainer Maria Rilke, Toller, and Stephen Spender but these people have through the medium of their poetry knit together the masses and urged them on to their struggle for power. Iqbal the man, who first conceived the idea of Pakistan, or atleast elaborated it giving it a coherent form had nothing in common with these poets of the people. In an age, of anti-Fascism, socialism, and communism he was governed by a romantic attachment to mysticism, and so far as the changes in the outer-world were concerned, he had no enthusiasm for



them, and was ever, like Rupert. Brook singing panegrics in praise of conservatism.

But a romantic poet like him could scarcely be prophet of a new age. Men like him could not give the lead in politics. The people of this province should have taken what he said about vivisection of the country with a pinch of salt. It was because they took up his cry and made it into a political slogan, that the spirit of disunity stalked this land.

The Akali and Hindu leaders cashed in a these "Pakistan" slogans by repeating to the people the old battle cries of Hindus and Sikhs against the Mughal Emperors, and thus creating hostility against the Mussalmans. While on one hand they continued behind the scenes deals with league leaders; on the other they let loose a campaign of calumny against Mussalmans. Their followers took all this with a remarkable spirit of complacence and even agreed with what they said. They did not for a moment think that these outworn battlecries, were useless in modern age; that the only criticism of league moves could be made from the democratic standpoint, and that the Hindu and Akali leaders were far from being democrats. Thus the mischief continued and is still being done to poison the minds of the youths of the province. Punjab is bleeding no less than Bengal and Sind are as a result of the terrible wounds inflicted on it by the communalists. It is another matter that its wounds are not so obvious. Crisis may not have come, but if disunity remains it may.

But the greatest gamble that the communalists have made in their bid for hegemony in some provinces in absence of the congress has been in North West Frontier. For the time being it has succeeded. But if any ministry has feet of clay it is that of North West Frontier. The Congress here

has greater strength than in Bengal for the majority -- Muslims are allied to it. The patriotic spirit rooted in the Pathans for years cannot vanish overnight as a result of the league rule. The league has gathered together the same supporters here which have been prominent in helping it elsewhere. These are the landlords, the Pirs and the leaders of Hindu Sabha and Sikhs who either co-operate with it or aid it by their scaremongering campaigns, which drives the Muslims in the arms of the league. But not all the landlords and the Pirs aid the league. Some of the Pirs, paradoxical as it may seem are in frontier province intensely Nationalistic. It is like the condition in loyalist Spain during the civil war, when numerous priests inspite of the " Reds burning nuns and churches " propoganda of the men of Caudillo Franco joined the republican party because they thought the cause of democracy and freedom could be best served in this way. Similarly in N. W. F. P. inspite of the virulent propoganda of the league leaders that the congress was a Hindu organisation and hostile to Muslim interests some of the Pirs of the Province backed up the Congress cause and kept up the bridge with it against reactioners.

The same is true of the landlords. The Badshah Khan is not the only lord to back up the Congress Cause. Many frontier landlords are on the side of the Congress.

The average Pathan is also not amenable to league propoganda. He has made great sacrifices in the cause of freedom since the memorable firing in Kissa Khawani Bazar in Peshawar, which took a heavy toll of the men of frontier province. The assumption of office by league is the result of a parliamentary manoeuvre and has nothing to do with the public opinion in that province. Some Muslim members of Assembly who were formerly congressmen and fought

elections on congress ticket have gone over to the league, but N. W. F. P. is not Sind that most of the Muslim members of the assembly should come into league, and adopt its political slogans. In Sind the reason of this "mass conversion" to league is that most of the Muslim members who have taken part in this right-about-turn were outside the congress fold. though they called themselves Nationalist Muslims and were followers of Allah Bux. But they had not fought elections on congress ticket, and as soon as Allah Bux was gone, they were left without a leader who could guide them and maintain discipline in their ranks.

In frontier it was different. The one or two Muslim members who had gone over to the league had broken the discipline of a strong party whose leader was Badshah Khan and they could not ignore his power in the province. Sooner or latter they might be asked by their constituents to resign their seats, and fight the elections fresh on the league ticket. Dr. Khan Sahib took a step in this direction when he challenged them to recontest the seats to Assembly. It might be possible soon with public support to get this re-election plan translated into action.

In any case discipline among congress in frontier has not laxed, nor has the strength of that party deteriorated. It would be difficult for the league to ride-roughshod over the wishes of the people.

But what harm has the league rendered to the Frontier province compared to its exploits in other prvinocs, where all this has led to famine, internal disorder disunity among Hindus, Mussalmaus and increased sense of insecurity about the dangers of Fascism?

Not much harm has been done there because the league had little opportunity to do so. But disunity among the Pathans has been created. The most glaring example

of it is the recent riots in Haripur. Enough mischief has been done there and both the leagues and their satellites the Hindus Sabhaites and Akalis are "cashing in" on it. Each side is blaming the other for aggravating the matter, and strengthening its own position among its co-religionists by raising, the ballyhoo of religious rights being in danger. The Premier says that the enemies of ministry are doing everything possible to discredit it and do not wish to see it functioning for a day. The Akali and Subha leaders believe that a great blow has been struck to the rights of the Hindus and the Mussalmans.

For the democrats, all this storm in the tea cup should provide a warning. The democratic criticism of the league ministry should be entirely different from that carried on by the Sabhaites and the Akalis. If Sardar Aurangzeb believes that Haripur affair is providing an opportunity to his enemies to turn the league out of office, then surely no democrat could take part in this "friendly quarrel" going on between him and Hindus and Sikh leaders. The congress leaders would not take up any such opportunity to launch a campaign against him. He may be rest assured about that. His statement then is either an admission of his weakness in face of lack of support by his allies or it is a clever move in war of nerves, calculated to discredit the Congress by raising the cry that it has joined the Akali and the Sabha critics of the league.

In any case the democrats should remain unmoved by these political manoeuvres of the league. Whatever the aims of the N. W. F. P. Premier be for the democrats, the best way to substitute a popular regime instead of that of league, would be mobilising of public opinion in support of

the campaign for release of all congress M. L. A.'s so that the Assembly should re-assemble in full strength at an early date, and give its verdict on the new ministry.

It is by these democratic methods that the popular regime can be brought back to office again in N. W. F. P. and not by taking sides in the Haripur or any other dispute that may spring up there. The democrats have to find a middle way between the league manoeuvres and the war of nerves and the Hindu and the Sikh Sabre-rattling.

## CHAPTER VI.

### **Democracy uprooted.**

But while the congressmen or the democrats may not wish to make any political capital out of the Haipur affair there is much to be learned from the conduct of the league leaders on the one hand and Hindu and Sikh leaders on the other. The reprehensible thing about all the platitudinous statements made by the rival leaders is that these people are attaching very great importance to the affair. Their attitude reveals that they judge democracy in terms of the benefit a particular religious group derives out of it. In other words it is a secular concept of democracy, which considers state as an instrument of religious progress. It is not typical of India only. Other countries think of state in similar terms. To His Holiness the Pope democracy has a meaning only if a catholic conservative part dominates in it and pays great attention to the church affairs, ruthlessly suppressing those ideas with which the church disagrees. The Irish Blue shirts and Falangists of Spain think in similar terms about democracy.

But how far have efforts in this direction met with any success? The idea of using state exclusively to defend

the interests of a particular religion or several religions is a very old one. The Budhists, Hindus, Moslims and Christians have all in the beginning followed this but inevitably the state disintergerated, as soon as it become a mere instrument in hands of some religious group. In our own times the catholic popular party in Italy and the centrum in Germany failed when they followed such a policy. The Spanish Falangists are not meeting with any great success, and Spain remains restless beneath a calm surface.

If religious groups have failed in Spain, Italy and Germany to make the state serve their ends, in India, the possibility of such a failure ought to be very great, since the religious parties are not so well organised as in Europe, and they face in congress, a strong opposition party with different ideas of functioning of the democratic state. But this has not deterred the leaders of various communal organisations.

Perhaps they think, that if they fail they would not loose much. On the other hand if they succeed they would have unlimited power. But if they have not much to loose. India has. This trend towards "secular democracy" would prove harmful to the interests of the country, specially in those parts of India where league is strident in power. These are the most backward provinces. Here more than anywhere else the need is of greater devotion towards removal of the conditions of economic and political serfdom prevailing among the people. Religious issues should not occupy much the attention of the democrates if the condition of the people is to undergo a change for the better. The attempts of establishing a "secular democracy" should be given up. Even in such a countries as Germany and Italy, such attempts of the centrum and other religious parties have done

incalculable harm. Fascism has been strident there due to such policy of these parties.

In India there may not be any other party existing on the Nazi and Fascist model to take advantage of such weaknesses of the league, but if this muddle continues, we may have some such offshoot of league, which would try to replace its veiled fascism with some out and out fascist government. In any case there is no doubt about it that secular democracy, or any attempt to make state an instrument for progress of one religion or several religions encourages fascist tendencies and uproots freedom.

In this sense the Haripur affair and the noise raised over it is foretaste of what may happen in Pakistan. Any small fray by men of one religion or other would become an object of cotroversy for months and the ministers would be waisting their constituents' time in wrangling over such disputes. Religious legislation to safeguard rights of different religions would be continuously coming up in the legislature, and most of the time of the Assembly members would be occupied in disposing of such bills. The plans of Nation-building or economic or social progress if ever anybody dared to think about them, in an atmosphere charged with religious tension, would be promptly shelved. But apart from the danger of communal frays occupying most of the time of the government in Pakistan, there is another acute problem which looms large. And that is of factional fight among the members of religious groups. To what extent feelings between the rival factions can be exacebrated could be observed from a recent tragic incident in Multan when the Tazia of the Shias was burnt by a rival faction of the Mussalmans. A recent press report says that a deputation of Punjab Shias waited on the Home Secretary Punjab headed by Raja Ghaznafar Ali Khan Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Revenue Punjab

to protest against this act which was according to them an organised attempt to hurt the feelings of the Shias.

In Multan tension prevails, while arrests have been made and Section 144 promulgated in the City for a month.

This event has not created as much stir as the Haripur affair, but all the same it is the subject of heated controversy among rival factions. The factional strife is however not limited to Mussalmans only. There are numerous factions among Hindus too, such as Sanatanists, and Arya Samajis, and several others, who are always at loggerheads with each other. In any such controversy the people gain nothing. It is only some influential men who are able to have greater backing among the people by such moves.

Such is the dismal picture which Pakistan presents to us. The conditions are not going to improve only by a campaign for release of the congress M.L.As. and a government-congress settlement to fight Fascism. The struggle against the Fascist invaders is no doubt of paramount importance, and a settlement between the congress and Britain would be of great help to that cause. But the internal affairs are no less important. Even if congress ministries start functioning in the provinces where they had majority and a National Government is formed at centre, that would not improve conditions in the "special areas" of Pakistan. In these "special areas" (which may be so described after the distressed areas in England before the war which were euphemistically called "special areas") entire re-education of the people has to be carried out before they can be made democratic minded. Just as the "special areas" were given greater attention by the Government in Great Britain the same has to be done about Punjab, Sind, and Assam and to a lesser extent Bengal. However the question here is not only removal of



poverty as in case of the "special areas" in Britain but also ending of communalism and the near fascist tendencies. Thus task of a war time National Government is more akin to the plans of re-educating the Nazi Germany being conceived by statesmen and political thinkers in England, America and Russia. Apart from the fact that these areas are not in need of reconquest they have to be re-educated like the Nazi Germany.

India's "special areas" are in no sense different from such dark spots of Europe as Germany, for which the democrats are elaborating their plans of re-education. Everywhere people hostile to democratic ideas have to be taught democracy. Even in England they are realising that Churchill's Government should be changed after the War by a democratic one. But while an awakening about this danger has come there, India is yet to realise its duty towards its "special areas." When the democrats of this country realise this dire peril to democracy in "special areas" of Punjab, Bengal, Sind and Assam, its cause would be saved.

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